

TASS STATEMENT

The Government of the United States is going still further along the dangerous path of building up arsenals of weapons of mass destruction of diverse kinds.

In August last year there was the announcement in Washington of the initiation of large-scale production of neutron warheads - a particularly inhuman variety of nuclear weapon, the very thought of the possible use of which provokes feelings of indignation among all peace-loving people.

Thereafter, in October 1981, the Government of the United States announced a comprehensive plan, unprecedented in scope, for the development of the strategic nuclear arms of the United States, including the production and deployment of a new generation of land- and sea-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, heavy bombers and long-range cruise missiles.

And now, just recently, President Reagan proclaimed a multi-billion-dollar programme for the "chemical rearmament" of the United States. The American Government, it seems, now finds that the huge reserves of poisonous chemical agents - another monstrous means for the mass extermination of people - which the United States already has at its disposal are not enough. It is now planned to equip the American armed forces with several millions of warheads filled with a new and even more lethal nerve-paralysing mixture (the so-called binary charges).

The decision to embark on the stepped-up production of chemical warfare agents clearly reveals why the United States has for many years so adamantly resisted the conclusion of an international convention which would prohibit chemical weapons.

It is now clear to everyone that Washington refused to continue the negotiations with the Soviet Union which were being held earlier on this subject because it was afraid that the prospect which had arisen in the course of the negotiations of the attainment of agreement on that score might hinder the execution of the plan for the "chemical rearmament" of the United States, which was evidently conceived a long time ago.

Nor, certainly, was it fortuitous - but in fact very significant - that the United States was the only one of the 157 States Members of the United Nations which voted against the adoption by the General Assembly of the resolution calling upon all States to refrain from the production and deployment of new types of chemical weapons and from stationing them on the territories of States where there are no such weapons at present.

It is patent that it was in an attempt to prepare world public opinion for the announcement of its decision to embark on the large-scale production of new chemical weapons, and in an endeavour somehow to justify that decision, that Washington had earlier resorted to its favourite trick of making slanderous assertions - in this case that the Soviet Union was using or was preparing to use chemical warfare agents, either in Afghanistan or in the jungles of South-East Asia.

This is a flagrant lie, hardly capable of casting a slur upon the straightforward and consistent policy of the Soviet Union which, unlike the United States, was one of the first States to adhere to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 prohibiting the use of chemical weapons. The Soviet Union has been and is in favour of the total outlawing of this criminal means of waging war and the destruction of all stocks of such weapons. And it has never and in no place used chemical warfare agents.